



Pygmy Owl in Our Kitchen by P. Payne // Egg Tempera on Panel

Part of a Series: *Giant Animals in Small Rooms*

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Cordova & Friends,

Welcome back to *The Catch*, Cordova's literary & arts quarterly.

We find ourselves in that precious moment between, where signs of winter and spring commingle into so many perfect days. If the sun keeps you up at night, or the rain keeps you in, or if you just feel like taking a moment to sit and appreciate printed word & art, I hope that you'll find something in here that sparks your creativity or curiosity.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTING WRITERS & ARTISTS. . . for sharing your selves, inspiring others, and for keeping this publication alive!

Thank you to a community who supports the arts.

See you in the Summer . . .

With Love & Gratitude,



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

Feature your art & writing in the **Summer** issue.

The theme is:



ALL AGES. ALL MEDIUMS. NO ENTRY LIMIT.

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Seasonal Catch

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Mixed Media Creature by Jude Nel

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Photograph by Hamish Laird

Elephant Seals

By Kate Laird

I wandered on the edge of the elephant seal colony when I heard one of our guests shout, "Kate, come here!" I looked over and saw Russell, a vet, sitting on a hilltop with Helen and Anna beside him. It didn't look like an emergency, but I climbed up to where they sat. Russell patted the ground beside him, and said, "You sit right here, in case there are any questions!" I did as I was told and realized that a four-ton elephant seal beach master was mating with the seemingly tiny half-ton female. Yes, I would be happy to answer my children's questions. They didn't have any though. At ages seven and five, watching mating elephant seals was just a normal day out on the Antarctic island of South Georgia. The beach master covered six females in the hour we sat together on the hill.

Female southern elephant seals and their pups resemble seals. Streamlined, ready to swim, they are a dusky brown – the pups start off black – with startling bubblegum pink inner mouths and

tongues. Male southern elephant seals look like Jabba the Hutt. They share the pink inner mouths, but it is often obscured by their inflated nose, unless their wide mouths are open to bite their rivals. The size and shape difference between males and females is so great that it's hard to reconcile them as a single species.

At one stage, a younger male appeared in the surf break. The beach master had about twenty females - perhaps the beach master would be distracted? No - he saw his rival, and roaring, his great nose inflated, he galumphed down the beach to attack.

While this battle went on, another smaller male came in from the edge of the harem, his eye on one of the females near the edge. He almost succeeded in mating with her, but the twenty females started calling and complaining about his presence.

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The beach master heard them and whirled around, forgetting the first rival, and charged up the beach, still roaring, and crushed a pup to death in the process. He came in for the attack, and the female scuttled out of the way, while he bit at the interloper, who gave up immediately and retreated to the other side of the beach.

The life expectancy of a male elephant seal is just over half that of a female elephant seal. Their peg-like teeth tear at the skin of their rivals, and blood washes down their necks. The males are all battle-scarred, often with bits of flesh hanging off that skuas like to eat, tearing off skin flaps and then dancing away from the seal's bellowing mouth. There was a story about a British soldier at the former base at King Edward Point who tried to kiss a male elephant seal on a dare. The seal scalped him.

When whales were scarce, male elephant seals were slaughtered for their oil. The industry co-existed with the shore-based whaling factories - when they closed in 1964, the elephant seal harvests ended too, as it was not economically feasible to run it as a stand-alone business. Three elephant seals produced a ton of oil - six thousand seals were slaughtered in the 1955-56 season. A blue whale might be rendered into fifty tons of oil.

Elephant seals may be the most successful amphibious animals - they are extraordinary divers and can live at sea for months at a time, as at home in the water as any of the great whales or dolphins. Yet, they can come ashore for several months a year for breeding and molting. In the breeding season, the males fight and tear each other apart; in the molt season, they snuggle in mud wallows, snoring and belching.

The piles of seals made them easy prey for sealers who could set up tripots on the beach over fires and render them down in sight of the rest of the wallow. The other seals couldn't flee because they were in the midst of their molt.

At sea, they seem to travel entirely alone. They can dive to depths of *over a mile* and hold their breath for up to two hours. The foraging elephant seal typically spends little time at the surface, before heading down on a deep dive. They may even sleep during the dive itself, like humans in suspended animation during science fiction space travel. They eat fish and squid, and may forage on the bottom itself the way walruses do.

This isn't a taught behavior. Female elephant seals wean their pups after about three weeks of nursing, and return to sea, half-starving. Over the next two months, the pups left behind - called "weanies" - live off their fat and spend most of their time sleeping in the sun, before losing their black infant fur and teaching themselves to swim. Their first swimming attempts in the shallow pools are awkward, and they hesitate to put their faces in the water. Snorting weanies splash together in rivers and pools until hunger sends them to sea alone.

We spent the afternoon watching elephant seals - there were also fur seals, king penguins, gentoo penguins, a light mantled sooty albatross and snow petrels on the beach - but Hamish and I found the elephant seals the most interesting because we'd never seen this part of the life cycle before.

"Weanies' eyes are so beautiful," said Anna - they were large and round - evolved for taking in every bit of light in the murky depths.

We left Helen and Anna playing on a hilltop with steep sides, out of reach of biting seals, and headed off to our anchored 56-foot sailboat *Seal*.

We were in the midst of dinner, when seven-year-old Helen called on the VHF. The radio distortion made her sound considerably younger than she sounded face to face. "Anna's fallen off the cliff into the weanies," she reported.

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My stomach clenched - what if she were injured? - we were a long way from the nearest medic at the scientific base and weeks away from a fully-equipped hospital. Nothing makes you see the remoteness of a place like the prospect of illness or injury.

"Is she okay?" I asked.

"I think so," reported Helen. The fall was one danger, the possibility of being bitten by a weanie another.

Hamish left his beef stew on the table and motored in to check on Anna. She was in good spirits and reported that she'd landed right next to a weanie, but it had merely opened one eye and then gone back to sleep. Orange-clad children falling out of the sky were not enough to distract him from the business of sleeping.

Hamish returned to *Seal*. "I'll pick them up in a bit. Anna's fine, and hopefully has learned her lesson." I always told them to stay a full body length away from cliff edges in case they fell, but clearly the lesson hadn't sunk in.

A couple of years later, we heard a story from one of the scientists at King Edward Point - he'd been scuba diving near the base and a male elephant seal saw him, and pressed him down onto the bottom. Apparently they do this to each other as part of their pre-mating season battles, although I've only ever seen them in the shallows, rearing their heads and upper bodies up, inflating their noses, and slashing each other with their teeth.

The scientist frantically tried to slow his breathing to conserve air - no easy task to calm down, when four tons of irritated seal is holding you down. He knew well that elephant seals can hold their breath for two hours, and he didn't have that much air in his tank. He was pretty sure he would die, and also knew that panic breathing would cut his chances in half.

The seal let him go before he ran out of air, but he never felt the same about elephant seals again.

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About a week later, we had a beautiful sunny day in Ocean Harbor. Russell went for a long walk, and on his return, he stretched out in the sun and fell asleep. Hamish and I came along a little while later to see Russell with a weanie seal cuddled up next to him, just as it would do with another seal.

We circled around, and quietly nudged Russell awake so he could witness the seal next to him. He shuffled back slowly, so as not to wake the seal. It slept on.

Our future trips to South Georgia were all late in the season so we never again saw such affectionate weanies.

About a week later, we headed for St. Andrews Bay - there had been many fine stops in between, with seals, hiking, penguins, and soaring albatross, but St. Andrews Bay is always a highlight. Helen said once a few years later - "It's always good weather in St. Andrews Bay." Hamish and I laughed: it was always good weather because we scoured the forecast and made all our route plans around having good weather in St. Andrews.

We'd been tied up snug with four lines ashore in Cobbler's Bay the night before. The weather promised to be perfect for St. Andrews - as long as we could get everyone ashore in the surf. St. Andrews Bay is a wide open "C" facing the ocean, and yesterday's wind had blown straight in, and there would be a nasty leftover swell.

St. Andrews was home to 150,000 breeding pairs of King Penguins - at any one time there might be close to 300,000 birds on the beach, and 150,000 at sea. The noise echoed in your head, even through windstopper hats and GoreTex hoods.

When we arrived, the swell was still coming in. We anchored *Seal*, alternately buffeted by the wind from one direction and the swell from the other. We launched *Whale*, the inflatable dinghy, and Hamish made a run in alone to test the feasibility of making a landing.

It looked best at the Clarke Rocks on the northern edge of the bay. Hamish would take the guests ashore - and I would bring the dinghy back to *Seal* alone to keep boat watch and because there was no safe way to leave the dinghy ashore in this swell. This is often the case: I'm not sure that Hamish and I have ever walked the beach at St. Andrews together.

Hamish drove up one of the narrow channels in the Clarke Rocks - the channels were perpendicular to the swell, so while the boat rose up and down with each one, there were no breaking waves. He drove into the rock at the end, balancing the engine throttle with the scend of the waves.

I jumped ashore and held the painter, although Hamish and the Yamaha were doing all the work. I held camera bags while the guests and Helen and Anna came ashore, and then climbed back into the dinghy to take over while Hamish went ashore. They also had a bag of overnight survival kit in case I couldn't get back to them.

Each adult had an oak closet-pole "bodger" to keep aggressive fur seals away. The children each had an empty bean can full of stones for the same purpose. The rattling stones are as effective as a stick for keeping the male fur seals away, but a "bodger" is actually a better tool, as the noise of the stones can send a male running through a territory, sending off a chain reaction of violence.

A smack with a bodger doesn't frighten them but may keep their teeth out of your leg.

Once Hamish was ashore, I backed out, waves spilling over the engine and the transom until the channel was wide enough to turn around, and I sped back to *Seal*, where I would cook supper, clean the heads, and watch penguins swimming by.

At suppertime, everyone was ready to come back to *Seal*, and I dressed to go ashore for a walk.

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Hamish called on the VHF and warned me that there were lots of young male elephant seals cruising the water around Clarke Rocks. A friend of ours had his dinghy punctured at a similar time of year in the same bay. The female elephant seals were leaving the beach, and the protection of the beach masters, to return to a solitary life at sea.

For the young males, this was the last chance at romance: they had been stuck in the surf for the last two months, eyeing the beach, and hoping for a few minutes of inattention from the beach master, but once the females left, they would scatter across the sea.

I wasn't sure if they mistook the gray Avon dinghy as a rival, or were simply so aggravated by their lack of success that they felt like attacking just anything.

Hamish kept an eye on the channels while I circled offshore. When it seemed clear of seals, I gunned the engine and rode the surf into the channel. It was not as difficult driving as it had been in the morning, but now I wasn't merely worried about rocks and surf, but also several tons of testosterone-fueled rage under the dark water.

I drove into the far ledge, motoring in to hold the boat in place while everyone scrambled aboard. Hamish took over the throttle and I climbed toward the bow and jumped onto the rock. As soon as my feet were ashore, Hamish backed out. I realized, in my haste to get ashore, I'd failed to grab a bodger from one of the guests.

I turned to wave at Hamish - "I need a bodger!" I called. He nodded and picked one up from the floor of the dinghy, and put the engine back into forward, driving up toward the rocks to throw it to me.

Then I saw a gray shape in the narrow channel.

"Get out! Get out!" I shouted. Hamish couldn't hear exactly what I was saying, but he

could tell I was shouting and waving, and he started to reverse. A huge gray shape emerged from the water, coming out to the same height as the seated guests. His mouth was agape, showing a bright pink tongue and long peg teeth, capable of ripping the tough leather of an elephant seal hide - the thin Hypalon dinghy skin wouldn't stand a chance.

He roared, and Hamish, bodger still in hand to throw to me, reversed his hold and smacked the seal solidly on the nose with the oak pole. The seal sunk below the surface, and Hamish gunned the engine in reverse, dropping the bodger back to the floor of the dinghy, and putting his hand with all his strength to hold the dinghy engine down as it tried to kick up.

Water slopped over the transom, but everyone was wearing waterproof gear and had cameras in dry bags.

Inflatable dinghies had a great advantage over aluminum skiffs because they could roll up and be stowed below for the deck-sweeping waves of the Southern Ocean, and most of the time they made good workboats, except when they met teeth.

The seal resurfaced, totally unharmed, but Hamish was already spinning the boat around and taking off towards *Seal* at fifteen knots. I stood on the rocks, watching the elephant seal swim lithely through the channel, searching for another target. I turned to take my walk, still without a bodger. I leaned over and picked up two stones. Knocking them together might keep the fur seals away, and elephant seals on shore weren't a threat.

I walked on the edge of the colony, listening to the penguins, spying reindeer coming down to the beach, where they wandered past seals and penguins, and past the sleepy weanies and the tired beach masters. Some female elephant seals were slipping back into the sea.

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No fur seals took any notice of me; I gave the males a wide berth. At about eleven, the light began to fade, so I called Hamish for a pick up. I did have gear for a night on shore, and the elephant seals had definitely been less active than in the morning, but I wasn't sure it would last.

If at all possible, I'd really like to get back on the boat. It was still too rough for a beach landing, so the narrow channels of Clarke Rocks were still the best option, despite the gray hulk of several young males cruising. It was a bit odd that they were lurking here, as most of the females were just going straight into the sea from the sandy beach. Maybe there were more young males over there.

As Hamish came in to pick me up, I considered that we were the only ones who could run the boat. Our guests would probably figure it out - they had helped build *Whale*, and they'd helped launch the boat every day and learned how to operate the winches, but they didn't know the details of how to start the boat, how to lower the out-

board onto the dinghy. The spare outboard and dinghy were in the forepeak. Would seven-year-old Helen remember to put two cushions down when opening the fore hatch to avoid breaking the hinge?

Hamish circled offshore, and I watched the channels. We had handheld VHF radios, so we could talk to each other about the plan.

Seal heads bobbed offshore in the surf. At last, it seemed that the channels were free. Hamish gunned the dinghy between the rocks. When he was a couple of feet away from me, he put it in reverse, hand on the engine and looking backwards, trusting me to take the chance to jump into the dinghy. I did, and dropped down to the floor of the dinghy, grabbing a bodger in case a seal attacked. None did.

With the adults returning to the sea for their first food in months, the weanies would cuddle together and sleep on, occasionally taking a practice swim on warm afternoons, until hunger compelled them to the ocean for the first time. Alone.



Weanie // Photograph by Hamish Laird

Celebration of Life

By Jillian Gold

Last year's headlines are no tether on you
It is rather we
Whose heads pivot downward
Hands ready to brace weight
Marionettes to your memory
We who canonize the vaguest breath of your
hereafter
We who offer a desk drawer for a tomb
A safehold from the settling dust
Make believe that life is tidy

Let us instead tear you into strips
One last tactile offering
Dip you into a bowl of cold, wet paste
Drape you over an inflated balloon
And dress you
Until you are lost
In a sea of rainbow frills

And not for a moment
Before you hatch
As a wild spray of glitter
Will we realize
The beauty of your evolution

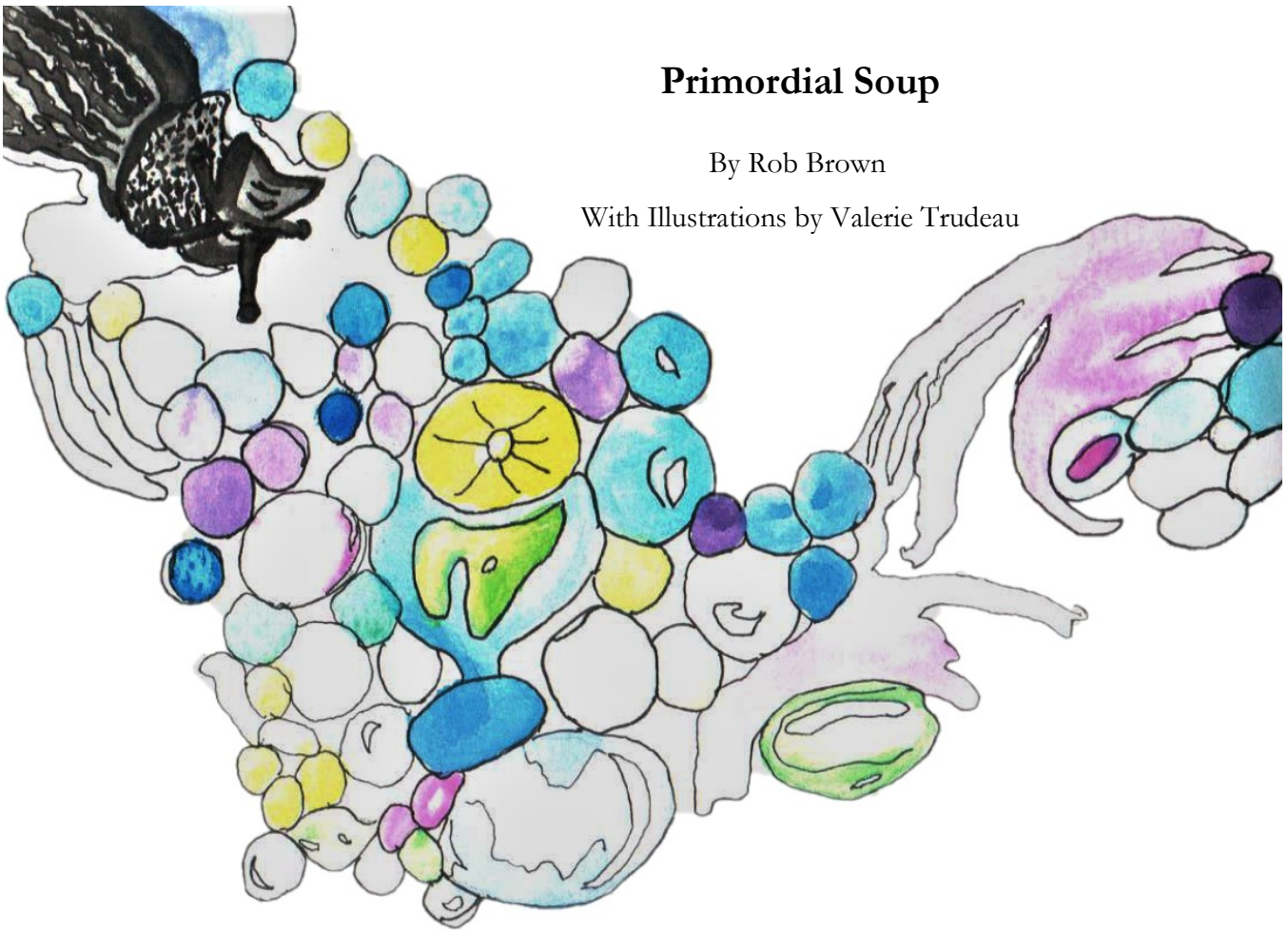


Unikitty by Runa Q. Kocan, age 6 // Pen and Highlighters

Primordial Soup

By Rob Brown

With Illustrations by Valerie Trudeau



Elenore was a thing of beauty . . .
Her sleek iridescent black body . . .
Glistened in the sun . . .
Perched on top of her quivering antenna
Were a pair of . . . opalescent orbs . . .

Elenore pondered . . .

“Are these voices in my head mine?
Or are they echoes from my ancestors that crawled from the . . .
Primordial Soup?”

Her inner dialog continued . . .
While a shimmering translucent trail followed her.

She slid gracefully across an emerald leaf.
Then proceeded to consume Mrs. Beasley’s prized Zinnias.
Elenore found the purple flowers most satisfying.

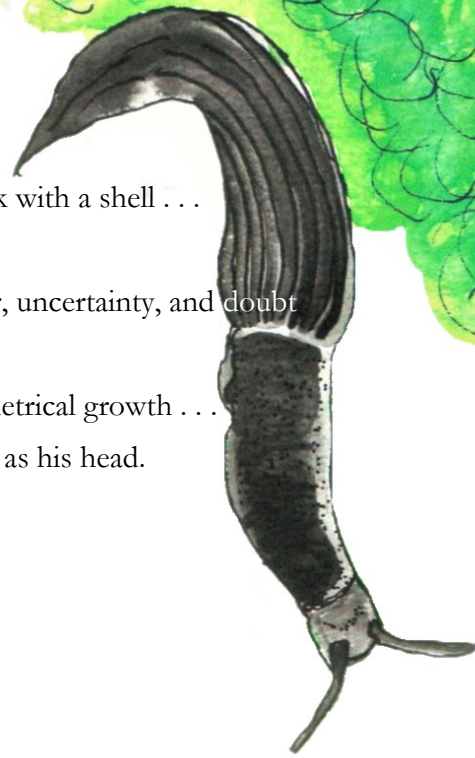
Elenore wasn’t your average . . .
Shell-less . . . Terrestrial . . . Gastropod . . . Mollusk

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"The Cerebral Hemorrhage"... was a terrestrial mollusk with a shell . . .
He proclaimed himself *King of the Garden* . . .
And by transmitting from his antennae a barrage of fear, uncertainty, and doubt
He manipulated the minds of the other gastropods.
For the spiral of his shell had impaired him with asymmetrical growth . . .
That caused his anus to be redirected to the same space as his head.

Perched on the head of a garden gnome
He could oversee his subjects from this throne.

The residents of the garden . . .
Awestruck by the brilliance of his golden shell . . .
Were his puppets . . .



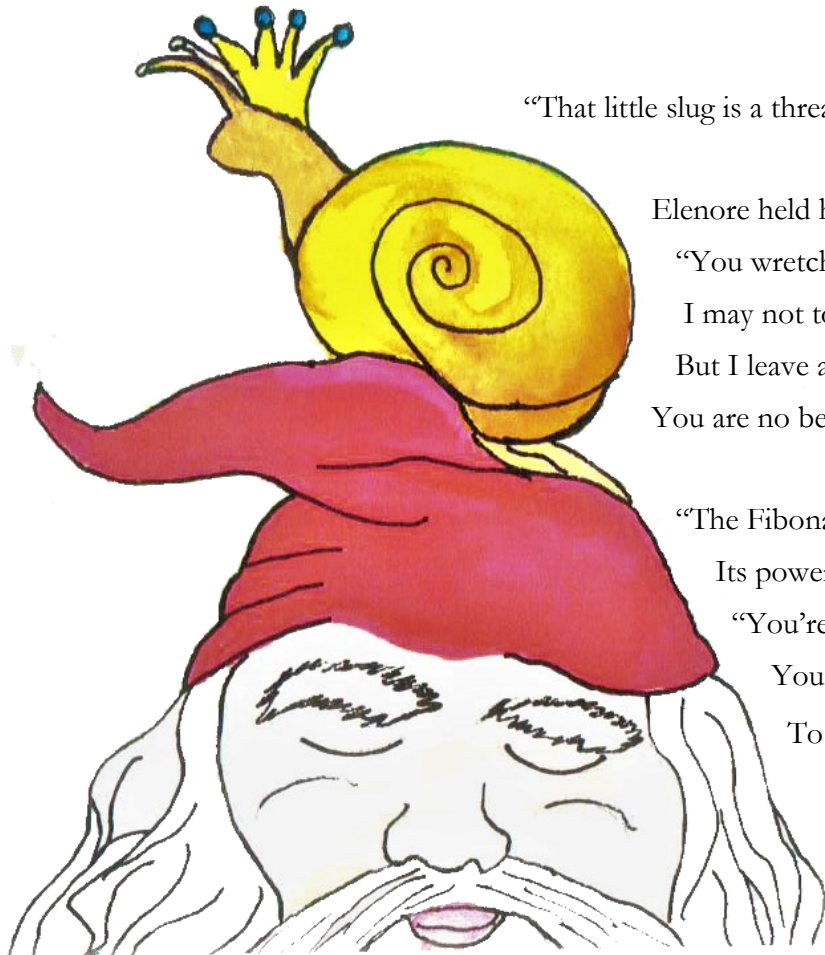
All except Elenore.

"That little slug is a threat to all that is gastropoda!" he bellowed.

Elenore held her head high and retorted,
"You wretched snail . . .
I may not tote a house upon my back,
But I leave a trail just like a snail.
You are no better than me."

"The Fibonacci sequence that forms my shell . . .
Its power I harness to create this hell!" screamed the snail.
"You're a shell-less gastropod who has no home or bed.
Your mind *must* obey the signals I transmit
To the tentacles attached to your head."

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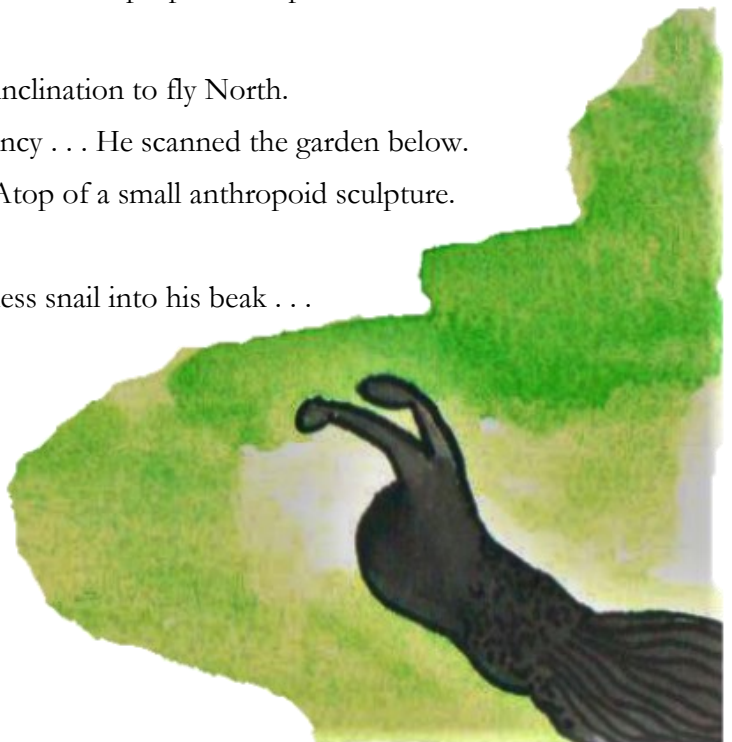


Beaming rhetoric into the antennas of the many residents of the garden,
They are coerced into a frenzy of invertebrate undulation.
“Elenore must be cast out into the salt,” they chanted . . .
As the *Grand Cerebral Hemorrhage* set the mob on his antagonist.



Melvin's handsome plumage had distinct iridescent purple-blue speculum feathers . . .
Edged with white.
He has recently been overcome with the inclination to fly North.
Exhausted, due to an acute caloric deficiency . . . He scanned the garden below.
Spotting the flash of a golden goblet . . . Atop of a small anthropoid sculpture.
“Escargot,” he thought.
And swooped down and sucked the helpless snail into his beak . . .

The empty shell fell to the ground.



Stealthy Lies, Led to My Demise

By RETH

Taste flesh, all my bittersweet regrets
Cup**held** up
You devoured me like one whole gulp of tea
Swallowed down in a single sip
No time to save**ber** from the pits of such a brute.
Is a cry with no bones ever heard at all?
You can't listen to what sorrow's silence brings
For she never speaks a sound
Aloud
Permission never granted
Yet still taken
Bones left shaken
Awake
Wide-eyed, in the belly of the beast
Too late
Through that gaze, already a feast.



Martha Stewart in Her Kitchen Being Eaten by a Great Gray Owl Chick

A Beast Named Fear

By Jillian Gold

I'll tell you about a beast that I've seen
Drifting along the thin fabric between
This reality on which we agree
And a nearby counter some say can't be

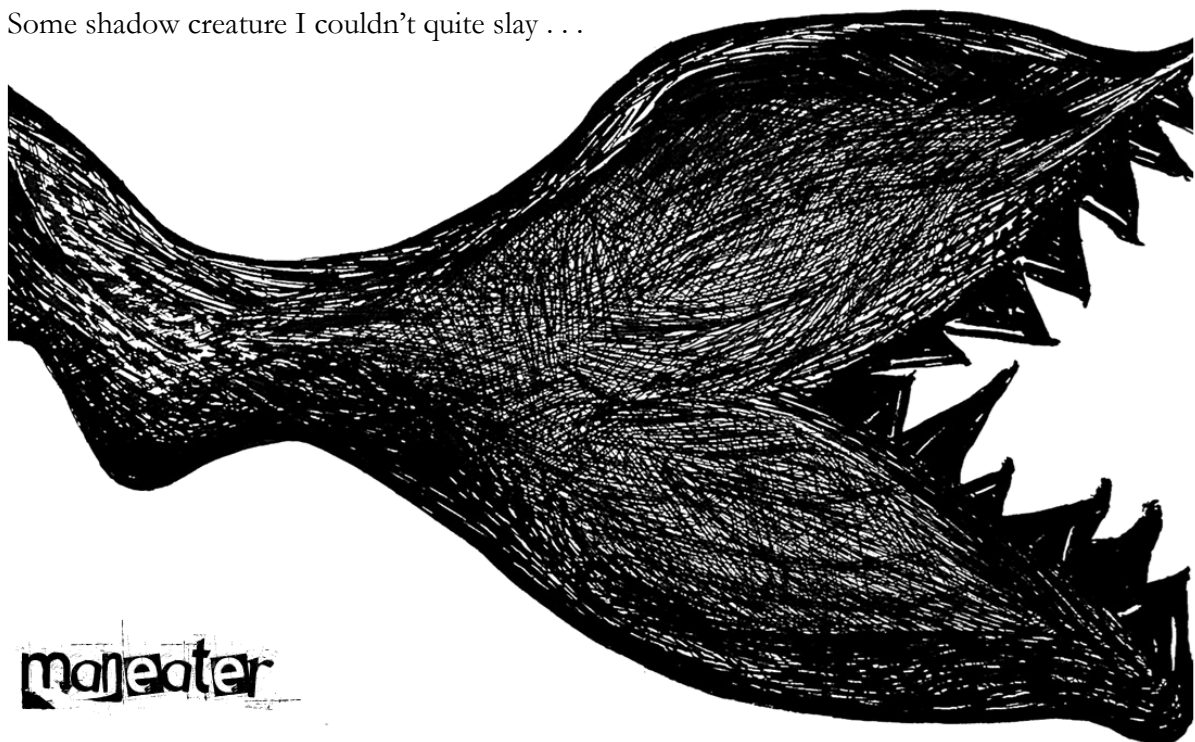
It's not one I've known from text or from lore
Not dragon or imp or fierce manticore
Though it tended toward some bits of all said
It was mostly just a tail and a head

Had no legs or wings, but gave speedy chase
Two jaws lined with fangs, but no proper face
An immense and looming, barbed silhouette
And doomed though I felt, I wasn't snatched yet

Somehow my eyes closed kept me from its reach
Softened the pang as it hurled ancient speech
Which, however strange, sent messages clear
A lucid proof of the language of fear

It bullied me out of my sanity
Made me consider the worst that could be
The memory of which I cannot erase
That form of entirely negative space

And just what it was I'm not fit to say,
Some shadow creature I couldn't quite slay . . .



maneater

What Would Pooh Do?

By Jeanie Gold

With all the struggle and pain
That exists today, both near and far,
I often think imaginary thoughts of change,
With things vastly improved from how they are.

Sometimes the acrimonious clangor,
With its lack of civility and boisterous anger
Between people and groups and nations,
Brings feelings of sadness, and frustration.

Add to this, channels of disinformation,
Where distortions and lies foment agitation,
Making enemies of those who once were not,
And poisoning humanity with a darkened blot.

All of this leaves me wondering what I can do
To help this great big world be a better place,
Where hostile divisions are eased, erased
And seeds of harmony are warmly embraced.

And then, I remember to take a calming breath,
And put focus on things that soothingly caress,
Like prayers of serenity and the words of Gandhi
Telling *me* to “be the change” that I seek.

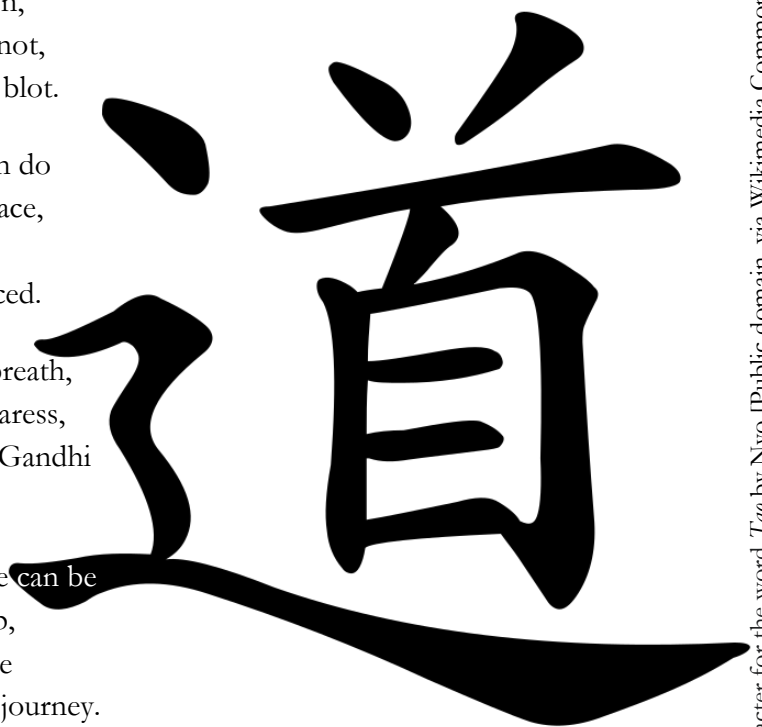
Though I am only one person, and change can be
A long, slow road that’s winding and steep,
The words of Lao-Tzu serve to remind me
That “one step” begins the start, of every journey.

In addition to the guidance of Gandhi and Lao-Tzu,
One of my favorite books is *The Tao of Pooh*.^{*}
It’s a delightful rendition of wisdom erudition,
A beautifully-written treasured acquisition.

So, day after day, I work to add positive steps,
To keep carrying on, and keep doing my best.
And when things feel heavy, I take a long deep breath,
Say a calming prayer, think of Gandhi and Lao-Tzu,

And then I playfully ask myself ...

What would (Winnie-the-) Pooh do? ☺



Chinese character for the word *Tao* by Nyo [Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons]

^{*}by Benjamin Hoff

A Letter from the Tiger to His Master

By Mike Towle

You say I'm an animal, you may be right
Yet who do you think made me to fight?
Feats and tricks you taught me, the audience to entertain,
But that wildness within me, difficult to untrain.

So my claws were clipped, the whip crack cracked, efforts to keep me tame
To a leash I was tethered, woven from social shame.
Losing control, you were quick to respond with the only tools you knew,
Fear to cow, shame to diminish, the behaviors that threatened you.

The tent became a prison, the crowd witness to my shame,
A proud and fearsome mighty roar, in their presence merely lame.
You say I'm an animal, on raw flesh I do prey,
Did you realize before I devour my scraps, I too give thanks and pray?

Those times I lashed out were not from hate, but in a desperate plea
Unleashed in waves of anger, "Share the pain with me!"
But snarls and growls just fell short of what I tried to convey,
Misunderstood, completely alone, I decided to run away.

Sharpening claws once kept trimmed, instincts taking hold
On my own I found great comfort, in being wet and cold
Pain and joy, courage and fear, clarity and insane
Words spoken that contradict, as feelings become the same

You say I'm an animal, a mindless beast with no control,
But take courage, look this beast in the eye, you'd see another wounded soul.
I return from time to time, to watch your circus from afar,
But never quite close enough for you, that tether left a scar.

In the ring you had worn my pride, and I had worn your shame,
Now separated by distance and time, we each have the other to blame.
And if we were to meet again, I'd grunt, "Everything is fine."
Though these wounds, left untreated, fester over time.

You say I'm an animal, it may be true,
But the wild that you fear in me, comes from fear of you.
This letter, stained and raw, you will likely burn,
Testament to your greatest failure, a shame you'd rather spurn.

Yet the pain I hold eternally, washes over me in waves,
How could I love a master whom I have ungratefully betrayed?
You say I'm an animal, and it may be so,
But I assure you this animal loves more than you know.

In the wild, success and failure, must share a common stage,
Perspectives anew, my letter reformed, simply change the page.

A Letter from the Tiger to His Trainer

By Mike Towle

You say I'm an animal, you may be right,
And it's to you I owe gratitude, for my ability to fight
Feats and tricks you taught me, we kept the audience entertained,
But that wildness within me, couldn't be untrained.

So my claws were clipped, the whip crack cracked, put me in my place,
To a leash I was tethered, keeping those around me safe.
Losing control, you were quick to respond with tools that you could trust,
Authority to command, accountability to moderate, which behaviors threatened us.

But the tent became my prison, in the crowds' gaze I felt shame,
A proud and fearsome mighty roar, in their presence must be tamed.
You say I'm an animal, uncooked meat upon my tray,
Though different feasts, something we share - before we eat, we pray.

I lashed out at you, not from hate, but in a desperate plea
Unleashed emotion, confusing anger and love, "Take the pain from me!"
But snarls and growls all felt short of what I tried to convey,
I felt misunderstood, completely alone, I knew I couldn't stay.

Sharpening claws once kept trimmed, instincts taking hold,
Thoughts of my past bringing comfort whilst being wet and cold.
I found joy in pain, courage in fear, clarity in the insane,
Civilized words that contradict, in the wild became the same.

You say I'm an animal, a mindless beast without a goal,
Take the time to look into my eyes, you'll see a hopeful soul.
I return from time to time, to watch your show from afar,
But never quite close enough to you, breaking that tether left a scar.

In the ring you had worn my pride, and I had worn your shame,
Now separated by distance and time, I see where I'm to blame.
And when we meet again someday, I'll show you everything is fine,
Though scars remain a testament, most wounds heal with time.

You say I'm an animal, I agree it's true
It's the wildness you saw in me, that made me afraid of you.
This letter, stained and raw, I will likely just go burn,
My greatest sadness should be kept hidden, for fear of being spurned.

The pain I carry every day, at night wakes me from sleep,
How could I hurt the one I love, who gave me everything?
You say I'm an animal . . . rightfully so,
But I assure you this animal loves you more than you may ever know.



Photograph by David Saiget

Nomadic Lament

By Steve Schoonmaker — *F/V Saulteur*

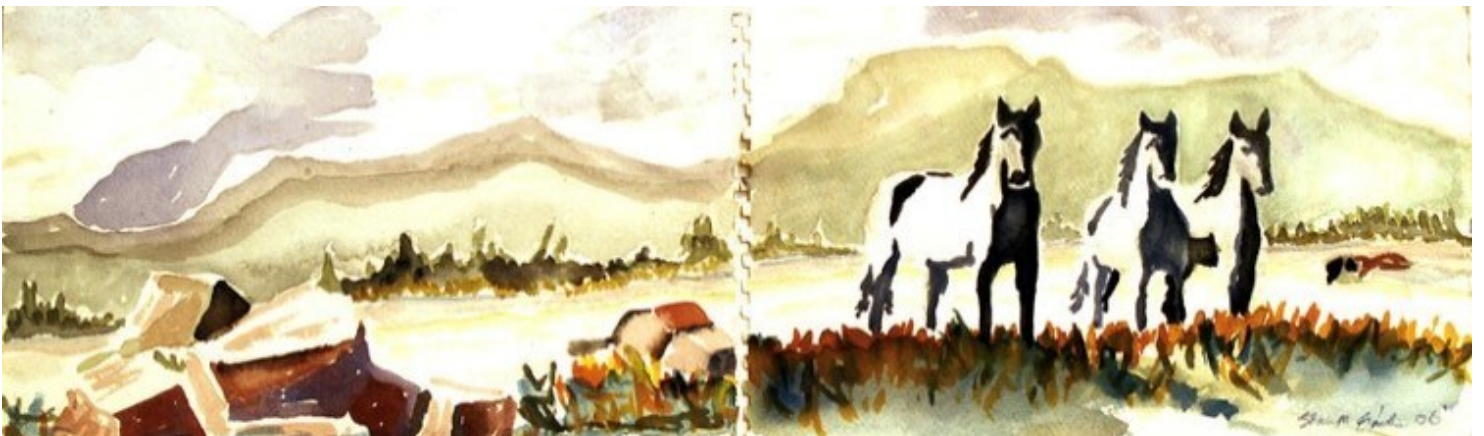
Just this side of heaven
Was right where we'd camp
And some seasons they'd bag
A fine Dall sheep champ
Some seasons we guided
The skunked, cold, and damp
World class whooped to all ends
From huntin' God's ramp
That gray wolf I worked for
We just knew as *Gramp*
Rubber wolverine tough
Half charley horse cramp
Looked wild as any duck
You'd find on your stamp
Gramp spent a mule's lifetime
Where curly horns tramp

I sometimes remember
Gramp's yarn by the fire
The end of one season
My prospects looked dire
I says,
"You know me well, Gramp
I'm a real tryer
But when I'm in town now
I'm not much to hire
I feel like some actor
Pretendin' on stage,
I just wear down a path
I'm set like some gauge,

"I'm racin' that hour hand
And my path ruts with age
Like some path at the edge
Of a zoo jaguar's cage
Yeah, I'm payin' the price
And it's twice my wage."

Well, ol' Gramp squints his eyes
Like readin' a page
Sometimes Gramp would git mystic
And sound like some sage
Plumb full of Earth's wisdom
Just a hair short of rage
Gramps says,
"Just boil the heart down, Bug
An' drink of that broth
You might see what's inside ya
You wild gypsy moth
Them urges in jaguar
Ain't urgin' the sloth
Bug, we urged fer that prow
Since we wore loin cloth
See . . . God's Earth has directions
For travelin' means
Survivin' her nature
Is how Ma Earth weans
There's something inside, Bug
That needs more than greens
We've bin eatin' caught meat
Since mountainside leans
They'll say it's bad for ya
And I'll say *smokescreens*,

(continues on next page)



"I'll say it's been downhill
Since we stopped ta grow beans
Was fillin' up lands, Bug
Before they had Queens!
We sure stop the balance
But can't stop our genes."

Gramp pokes at the fire
His eyes kind of glaze
He says,
"Wish't I could say so
But this ain't no phase
More highways an' borders
More laws, everyways
Seems mortal man's shadows
Git longer these days."

That ol' dude sitter's glare
Could make a bear pee
Gramp glared at the campfire
With his glare times three
Whisperin',
"Wanderin' hunters
Root our family tree
Now just pictures in scenes
Past some museum's fee
Nomads of this land mass
Could once roam so free
Could just hunt anywhere
By bends of their knee
But wide-open country
Still ain't up ta me
Wha't sendin' out calls, Bug
Gits scarcer ta be."

Yeah, that guide's kindly face
Had ten thousand tans
Was damn good with horses
And met their demands
Pleased many a hard client
Worked the asses off hands
Man, he'd been in them hills
Since before beer in cans

He says,
"When our hunters' children
Come answerin', lands
Then no hills will be safe
Fer wild Dall sheep bands
So some lines'll git drawn
Can everyone's plans
Savin' sheep's fear fer wolves
On scenic park lands."

That ol' bird could track game
Where satellites play
Gramp could shape a dude's mood
Like made out of clay
And so dog gone fair chase
It'd make them guys pray

He says,
"No will of the people
Breed hunters away
Denied by their masses
But born everyday
When gatherin' peoples
Can no longer stray
Extinct is some purpose
Lord gone is some way
But take heart, gypsy moth
In this that I'll say
If drawn ta that flame, Bug
Yer really okay

See . . .
Old ways can slow changes
Yeah, there's still the kind
They just carry that life
In back of their mind
They're out there . . . frustrated
Some never refined
Where most can still manage
Us bugs feel that bind."

(continues on next page)

Been years since I heard Gramp
Describe my design
I think of it often
I know where I shine
Some ways from the numbers
That I'd been assigned
On some bog or rock's top
My senses aligned
Some reasons for bein'
Got clearly defined
What's descended till now
Didn't come from behind

Go way out, off the ends
Where there ain't cement
There are more than enough
'Neath Sky's starry tent
From a breeze still liftin'
A wild jaguar's scent
To a breeze liftin' ours
When we're where we're meant
We're neurally groundin'
With time out there spent
Can be more like a brave
And less like a gent
Still followin' pathways
Where ancestors went
Where the times of the now
And the past just get bent
In the places like these
We been puttin' a dent!
And still stingin' that hurt
Oh, *nomadic lament*.



Lips, in Honor of a Horse by Steve Schoonmaker // Pencil

Blot

By Greg Mans

Nine whimsical dragons marched into town.

Eight climbed through my window.

They stood around my bed trying to enter my dreams, but I showed them.

I laid still, faking sleep for two years and snuck past while they were dozing.

The ninth dragon had strolled past my window and kept on to the river.

There he sat with eyes closed listening to ruffles, knowing soon I would come.



Getting Up by Greg Mans // Acrylic Mouth-Stick Painting with Fold

Cannery Road (*A Steinbeck Tribute*)

By Gabe Cap

Jack Elliot stepped into the lighthouse where the bums lived. He sometimes lived with them but recently had fancy ideas about being something more; even got himself an after-hours job cleaning the conveyor belts and steamer at the cannery. He ate a king's fill of steamed crab that had fallen on the floor during the day shift. Warm crab on a winter's night was divine, and he was happy to share that bounty with his pals. Jack Elliot liked his new job.

Closing the lighthouse door, he tossed a sack at the nearest body. With an *uff*, the bum rolled over, spotted Jack, and asked, "What's this then?" He opened the sack a bit and saw the cracked claws.

"Just some leftovers. What's goin' on, Fluffy."

"Scored some wine from Sugarman. Wanna hit?"

Jack considered, "Maybe in a bit. Anybody else still up?"

"I think Longclaw's up with the beacon. Here, take these with you if you're going up. I can't eat just now." Fluffy threw the sack back at Jack.

Jack walked up the spiral staircase to the beacon room, "Hey Longclaw, seeing much tonight?"

"Oh, hello lad. Aint seen much through the clouds, mostly just listening to the rain tapping. When I was your age, lad, this was a different place. The lighthouse keeper, his wife, and their three kids lived here. They had a garden in the summer . . . with string beans . . . and zucchini." Longclaw quieted for a few breaths, shaking his head slowly.

"Now they've got that damn electrical array; makes a devil of a noise if you get close enough. OMNI-directional! Gone are the incandescent lights. No more oil; no more candles! Buoys with batteries, radars . . . computers do all the navigating now. Ah, this place is a shell. No value left; just filled up with bums."

(continues on next page)



Captain Ron by Steve Schoonmaker // Pastels

"Well, it does keep us warm," Jack replied, "and they are our friends." Longclaw didn't respond. He just sat in his lawn chair and stared through the clouds. Jack pulled up a bucket, leaned against the glass wall, and stared too. Jack had a hard time understanding the feelings of loss and nostalgia that Longclaw had for this place, but he wanted to help. He often considered fixing the light, having it run again, making Longclaw feel better. For now, he tossed him a crab claw.

Indeed, Jack liked the lighthouse just the way it was. Moss growing up the sides of the steps, and vines that reached all the way up to the balcony railings. Vines so thick he could use them to climb down to the bottom if he'd had the notion. Sometimes they'd even have fires, if someone was cold enough to find some wood to burn. If not, they'd huddle together like newborn puppies covered in wool blankets. Surplus issue from when the army was still stationed on the island. Jack started thinking about one of those cold times; about Fluffy's big idea to get a lot of wood all at once.

"Let's go down to the freighter's office and score some pallets."

"You want to carry them all the way back here?" Jack said.

"No. We'll put 'em in a truck and drive 'em back. We'll stack 'em as high as we can and stay warm a long time."

"We don't have a truck."

"I know where Ray parks his truck when he's out hauling barge lines. We'll just borrow it and bring it back. He won't even notice. No harm done."

They found the truck parked, with keys in the ignition, at the camp where the tug pilots stayed. "Do you know how to drive, Fluffy?" Jack asked. "Well, sort of," Fluffy hesitated, "mostly, I do." They hopped in, and Fluffy looked around thoughtfully for a good, long while be-

fore pressing down on the clutch. As soon as he did, they were rolling backward. He cut the wheel and hit the brake, lurching to a stop. With a nervous laugh, he hit the clutch again, and started her up. It would have been impossible for Jack not to have noticed the vehicle straining and shaking, but Fluffy just smiled and said, "See. Nothing to it."

Once they got going, they didn't stop. Not even for the old lady who was crossing the street. Fluffy beat her to the corner so he wouldn't have to stop, which probably was the safer call. They made their way to the freighter's office where pallets were stacked tidily by the hundreds. Fluffy parked somewhere flat and lined the truck up for a clean get away. He had about as much notion to ask permission for the pallets as he'd had for Ray's truck. He just knew it would be fine, but also didn't want anyone to know what he was up to. "Come on, Jack. Let's set these wet ones aside and load up." They filled the bed up past the top of the roof and tied their load down with straps Ray had in the truck. "We'll drive real slow on the way back, Jack. Real safe." Fluffy never really accelerated, and never braked once, regardless of stop signs.

When they got back to the lighthouse, and the boys saw the tower of pallets, they all came out and helped unload. This group might have seemed lazy sometimes, but they could also get into a real frenzy if it was important enough. They started breaking down the pallets, throwing them against the ground, kicking and prying them apart any way they could. They stacked the pieces up neatly and used an old tarp to cover the load. The boys were pleased with their work and went inside to start a fire. But the job was not quite finished. The truck still needed to be returned. The lighthouse was built on a cliff, and Fluffy was parked in such a way that his only option was to back it downhill.

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Fluffy sat stiffly, sizing up that cliff's edge in the rearview. He swallowed hard and started the engine, shifted into reverse and, as he went to release the clutch, sputtered and stalled. "Christ Mary!" he spit out as the truck kept rolling in neutral. He slammed on the break and took a deep breath, noting the limited distance behind them left for maneuvering. He decided it best to go forward a little bit to reposition the truck, but all he could manage was to continue stalling, rolling, and breaking. "Jesus, Mary, Joseph!" Fluffy had lost his nerve. The rear tires were inches from the edge.

Fluffy realized his luck had finally run out. He'd have to abandon the truck or go down with it. A day or two of shucking oysters to pay for a necessity or a jug was one thing. But he could never work off a whole truck. Neither could he stand the idea of losing his home. If he survived and the truck didn't, he would have to leave to another town. He could see only one option.

"Get out of the truck, Jack," he said as solemnly as a ship's captain preparing for the end. Worriedly, Jack opened the door and got out. "Holy Mother, please!" Fluffy spouted as he turned the engine over for the last time.

"Wait!" Jack shouted. "There's a car coming. I'll see if they can help us." Jack ran down the hill flailing his arms. "We need help! We're stuck and about to go over the ledge." The stranger found a rope in his car and backed up to the truck. He tied one end to its front axle and the other to his rear bumper. It didn't take much effort after that. He got in his car and pulled till the truck was straightened out and on flat land again. Jack, eager to help, untied the rope for the stranger.

"You used a bowline! Are you a fisherman?" Jack probed.

The stranger chuckled. "Not anymore, came in handy though. You were backed up onto a big patch of ice. It's no wonder you couldn't get it to go forward. Tell your friend not to get close to

that edge again. It may not end so well the next time." With that, he got in his car and drove away. Jack went over to check on Fluffy. "I've never seen that guy before. Did you recognize him?"

"No. I don't know him."

"Do you think he was your guardian angel?"

"My what?! Where'd you get that idea?"

"I heard you praying."

"That weren't praying, Jackie boy. That were cursing. Eh . . . may you never know the difference. Just be quiet about it and let's get out of here."

When driving past the harbor, Fluffy locked eyes with Ray who was walking up the ramp from the dock. "He's back early." He shivered a little imagining the thrashing he was likely to receive. But Ray never mentioned a thing when they walked past each other a few minutes later. All Ray did was nod at him and Jack, too tired from work to engage in conversation. Fluffy was thankful for Ray's discretion and made a silent agreement to whomever was listening, never to attempt to drive again. A promise he kept.

Ray never said anything because he wasn't the owner of the '59 Ford Ranchero used in the heist. Ray owned an El Camino. It was a 2-speed Powerglide automatic.

Jack had fallen asleep thinking about that adventure. When he woke up the next morning, he found a wool blanket draped over him. The bag of crab was gone. "A fair trade," he thought. "I'm gonna go to school today. Went three days last week. Three years left if I wanna graduate." He loved watching the sun rise from the lighthouse. It was Monday, and Jack Elliot was late for school.

Byzantium

By Sam Bair

I hit some paydirt in bed this afternoon,
By typing "Sailing to Byzantium"
Into YouTube.

A long time I have
Been reading The Odyssey
Following along
While it is recited in ancient Greek
In tape cassettes
And then going back
For the English.

The Collected Poems
Of JP Bishop I copied out
Last year, one by one,

Finally some purchase,
The temple at Delphi is
Divulging its treasures
As once it did
When I was younger
And not standing trial
For the death of god.

This is progress -
To inquire
And no longer answered
With Stony walls,
As though I were
A human being
Who needed intercourse
For the sake of love and beauty.

The world is opening up
As once it did in Byzantium,
Handmaiden to the Ottoman Turk,
There is no intrigue without its intriguer
The riddle is meant for its solver.
The Turks took the trouble to take over.
Then came science.

And science offsets poetry,
Poetry's muse is memory;
Science has none.
For 600 years Greece was under Turkey
Only emerging in 1950, to fight

A terrible war with itself
Between a King and the Communist forces,
The Allies behind the proxy King,
The Soviets behind the democracy.

There is much in Homer
That was borrowed or taken into
The Gospel. I needn't go into that . . .
Just look at these celebrities reciting Yeats
I had forgotten about the band Liars . . .
It has been so long since my friends have
Picked up the guitar,

Ever since the evil day
Why?
That the detectives showed up to ask,
"Are those musical instruments?"
With a wise look.
And the lawyer said,
"Don't say that you are bohemian -
A jury will convict.
You'll never see the **light of day** ever again."

From that day to **this**,
It's like losing one's **independence**...
How could it happen?
What happened in Byzantium?



The Meditation Buddy by Justin Nuzzi

3/4" Black Iron Pipe Sculpture



Me and Gus

Adventures in Feeding a Fishing Boat Crew

By Gerald Pieface Masolini

This is a story about a hungry fisherman and how he solved the problem of putting 3 square meals on the table even during times of full-bore fishing.

Salmon seining in Alaska's Prince William Sound can last from late spring until early fall, depending on the amount of salmon available to be caught. It's possible that a salmon seine boat could leave its hometown of Cordova in the spring and not have a good chance of replenishing its food supplies until season's end, 70 days later. There's the old joke about fishermen living on humpies (pink salmon) and hot cakes . . . but when that's all there is for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, it's not a very funny joke anymore.

Most seine boats have a crew of 4, including the skipper. During a busy season, these crews often start work at 6 in the morning and may not stop until the catch is sold to a tender (buyer boat) late in the evening. Plenty of serious nutritious

food is required to fuel the calorie-burning crew, plus helping to keep their morale up. This can be a big order considering everyone has to get along, living in tight quarters.

Late one winter, a young fisherman friend of mine, Gus Linville, approached me with a problem; he had a good boat, a good crew, good gear . . . everything good except he was having trouble keeping the crew fed, including himself. Gus had an idea on how to fix the hunger problem: he would hire a fifth crew member; a dedicated cook. After much discussion of what this new job position would require, Gus asked me if I would give it a try. I was in my sixties then and Gus was in his twenties. I was honored that such a young, top fisherman like Gus would consider me. I said yes, and away we went.

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The first thing we settled was where to buy the food. Actually, there was no discussion: we would buy all the food in hometown Cordova. Again and again over the following seasons, this proved to be a good decision. The local merchants stood on their heads to help us. I mean getting hard-to-get good things to eat like buffalo roasts and fresh picked apples out of New Zealand. I can't brag enough on how much the local grocers helped us.

The next thing I did was to contact the crew to see what they liked to eat, and if they had any food allergies, etc. One guy said he liked ice cream, but none of that cheap stuff. Gus said, "Get it". He wanted a well-fed crew.

The next question was where to stage the food as I gathered it before the season and where would we later store it all on the boat. Gus had a warehouse with a couple of freezers which were crucial . . . with them I could buy lots of our food weeks before the season, thus avoiding the last-minute rush of shoppers. Including various meats, we froze dairy items like cheese, milk, and butter.

Gus explained to me, clearly, that he didn't want fancy food. He wanted lots of red meat and dark green leafy vegetables. He was ok with deserts, but not real crazy about them (*those were the man's words*). We bought an extra 7 cubic foot chest freezer, just for frozen vegetables and some fruit . . . it turned out that several variations of stir-fried green beans were a hit . . . I learned to taste those frozen vegetables before buying . . . some brands of frozen vegetables aren't the best. That's another way shopping early and locally helped. The storekeepers would special-order cases of certain items I wanted.

I started talking to our grocery suppliers in January . . . which was way early, but I wanted them to know I was planning my summer menu and I was depending on them for the ingredients needed.

Gus's boat had a rather cool, dry area ahead of the engine room that was good for cases of dry storage vegetables such as cabbage (*lotsa* cabbage), onions, sweet potatoes, yams, apples, squash, potatoes, carrots, turnips, rutabagas, and parsnips and maybe a melon or two.

I'd hide a watermelon in my bunk and bring it out for the fourth of July. I pampered that crew all I could; I figured it was part of my job. I guess I took this to extremes at times . . . such as hot drinks for when they rolled out of their bunks in the morning: Misa Webber liked hot chocolate, so I made hers with whipped cream on top, plus shaved chocolate on top of the cream. Everybody had a specialty.

The fridgie in the galley was good for some vegetables like bell peppers. By removing the plastic drawer in the bottom of the fridge, we were able to stack in almost 200 eggs: ten cartons, each holding 18 eggs. This sounds like a lot until you get a run on something like breakfast burritos, which of course has a domino effect on your cheese supply, etc., etc.

The only sit-down meal we had was dinner, which came in the evening after the day's catch was sold and the boat made ready for the next day . . . Gus insisted on a sit-down dinner with all the crew at the table. This was an important chance for everyone to relax, enjoy their meal, and take part in the camaraderie. Then off to the bunks they'd go, and I would take care of after-meal clean-up.

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Gus wanted everyone to share in clean-up, but I argued to let me do it all . . . I didn't want those tired workers bumbling around in my workplace and anyway sleep was precious; the more sleep they could get, the better they could fish the next day. Every move we made on that boat was aimed at putting more fish in the hold . . . that's the same kind of thinking Gus used when he hired a dedicated cook: he wanted a well-fueled crew to be eating buffalo steaks instead of pop-tarts.

We never had a scheduled breakfast or lunch, because hopefully everyone would be too busy to stop working. Instead, I asked the crew to signal me when they were hungry and I'd make them a custom meal; whatever they wanted, and they'd eat standing up in their rain gear whenever they got a few spare minutes.

In the beginning nobody knew what to expect from a dedicated cook . . . not even me. I thought it would be nice to wake them up in the morning to the smell of muffins in the oven, but that got old quick. What did work, always, was to make up plates of apple slices and pass them around, even when the crew came blinky-eyed out of their bunks.

It's fun to watch people with their eating habits . . . if you put out a display of whole apples as snacks, almost nobody will touch them . . . but if you cut those apples into bite-size slices and arrange them neatly on a plate, they'll wolf them all down.

When it comes to apples, a cook should know that they are not all equal . . . in the United States, most apples are picked in the fall, so if you are buying your boat supply in May, they have probably been in nitrogen storage all winter . . . they are ok, but not the quality you want to pamper your crew with. Ask your local hometown grocer to order the first New

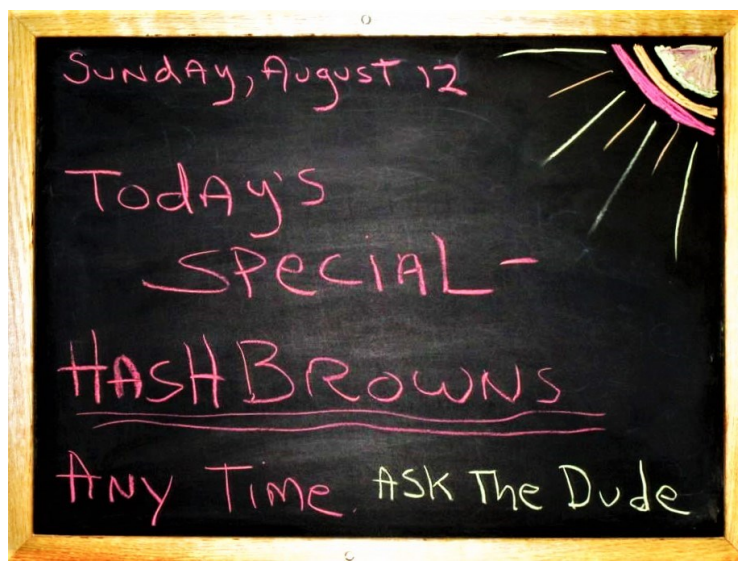
Zealand apples he can get for you in our late spring. That's when they are being picked in the southern hemisphere. For Gus's boat I used to order 120 pounds of Koru apples, right off the tree; sweet and juicy and crisp. Plus, very important, they are excellent keepers. Store them in a cool spot on the boat and trickle them out to the crew during the season . . . they are always welcome, and will save you from making muffins and cookies over and over.

Allow yourself plenty of time to choose and buy all the food you'll need for the season . . . I liked to do most of the buying by myself. Early mornings are the best time to be at the store . . . it's quiet and just looking at all the items helps you plan your summer's cooking. I would buy a cart or two and then take them to Gus's warehouse for temporary storage.

Rounding up a whole season's groceries took several days. And a lot of money . . . Bob Linville, Gus's dad, was the money-man, the patriarch in the background of all this activity. He would load up a charge account for me at the grocery store, and I would spend it. When the account was empty I would tell Bob or Gus that I was spending their money like a drunken sailor and they would look at me like maybe my mother dropped me on my head when I was little. They never seemed dismayed or disappointed with me. I guess they were happy to see future meals stacking up.

As we gained experience when the seasons went by, we could make a good guess at how much basic food we needed for a possible 70-day season. We knew that it took 7 pounds of meat a day and 3 to 4 pounds of frozen vegetables just to get started . . . this is not counting all the garlic, cheese, quinoa (*Gus liked quinoa*), and all the dry goods that went along with it . . . and a big red can of coffee every week or ten days, etc., etc.

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Photograph by Annie Linville

Here's a rough list of the protein items we would go through:

Sixteen leg of lamb roasts . . . These weigh only 4 and a half pounds, so I would roast two at a time, loaded with garlic. This would leave a nice pile of steaks for Gus's breakfast the next morning.

Eighteen whole frozen chickens . . . Ranger brand, free range, organic . . . two per dinner, a roasted half-chicken per person. Again, loaded with garlic. All meats got plenty of garlic . . . real, fresh, hard garlic was the only kind to buy . . . I'd never feel secure without at least a half-gallon of nice heads of garlic to start the season with.

Twelve 5-pound packages of coarse ground buffalo burger for spaghetti. Gus and I liked our burger to be coarse ground, as it held the flavor better. For our crowd, it took 5 pounds of burger per meal . . . all covered with melted sharp Tillamook cheddar as it went steaming to the table. Make sure to leave the lid on until it's in the middle of the table and everyone is seated. Then remove the lid and let those good smells float around. Gus and I talked about presentation, and it was part of the enjoyment of the meal . . . it was fun to see the hungry crew's faces as the lid came off.

Buffalo chuck roasts. Cordova's Front Door Store offered fresh-ground buffalo burger . . . I talked to Tim the butcher and found out he ordered whole buffalo chuck roasts and ground them daily according to customer demand. I ended up buying ten or twelve of these . . . they averaged 17 pounds, so I cut them into steaks and roasts as the season went by.

Buffalo ribs . . . Tim would order me a few cases of these rib racks, enough for a meal of them every ten days or so. As you could guess, life was getting pretty good on Gus's boat.

Corned Beef . . . enough for about one meal a month . . . again, keeping with my rule of 7 pounds of meat a day. You don't want to run short on corned beef in the middle of a feast . . . and, as always, I cooked enough meat so there'd be some for Gus's breakfast the next morning. A standard Gus breakfast was a platter loaded with some dark green vegetables (green beans, spinach, broccoli, etc.), 3 scrambled eggs (pepper jack cheese melted on top), quinoa, red meat (tee bone steaks made for a nice presentation in the center of that platter).

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This sounds like a lot of food, but keep in mind that when there were a lot of fish to catch, that crew was moving as fast as they could, all day; sweat pouring off them sometimes. On hot afternoons I would hand Gus a cup of water between sets . . . often he'd drink half and pour the rest over his head. He could run up the ladder to the crow's nest with a cup of coffee in one hand. I don't know how he did it.

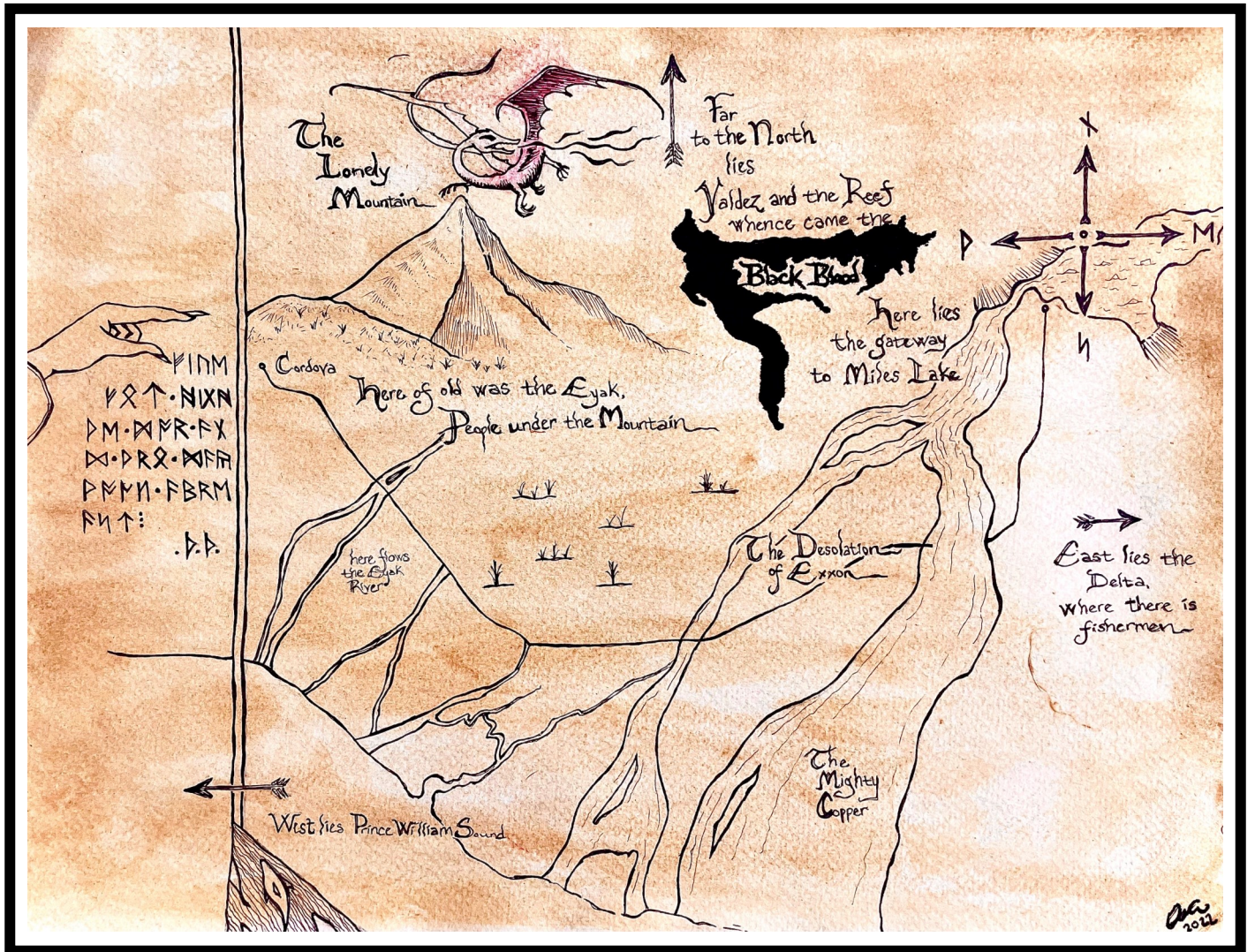
Soup. In addition to three square meals a day, on cold, rainy days I liked to keep a gallon and a half pot of soup on the stove . . . nothing special . . . I'd usually start out with smoked ham hocks or sliced polish sausage and add any likely leftovers in the fridgie . . . then what ever else came to mind: cans of any form of tomatoes or corn or beans . . . maybe some noodles or cubed up potatoes, onions . . . or squash and, lastly, some cabbage. The main idea was to have something hot and nutritious and ready any time.

After a couple of seasons cooking for Gus, he decided to have a new seine boat built . . . of course it was designed for catching fish, but he and I spent a lot of time discussing everything to do with food on a boat. His new boat, the Frisian Lady, had four chest freezers (each with seven cubic feet) . . . plus a couple of cubic feet in the fridgie freezer. That adds up to 30 cubic feet for frozen food. We now had room for plenty of baked items like English muffins, bagels and bread, plus frozen fruit for cobbler, etc.

It took a while for Gus to develop a hunger-free boat, but the Frisian Lady was the final answer. There were no more hungry fishermen on that boat. We had a lot of good times out there. Lots of fun. Me and Gus.



Photograph by Greg Mans



The Lonely Mountain by Alysha Cypher // Watercolor, Pen and Ink

Kushtaka

By Rob Ammerman

I heard there was a kushtaka lurking in my backyard
Waiting to lure my children off into the woods
Where tails of salmon who gifted wisdom to those who might catch them
Were traded for something priceless.

In the pregnant belly of the river
An emerald pool eddies,
A well of knowledge
For those willing to follow the webbed tracks of the kushtaka.

Clinging tightly to basalt with muddy toes,
Bolstered by the salt-stiffened beard of the old green man,
There lives a tree that drops acorns to An Bradán Feasa,
The salmon of knowledge.

Not a fisherman alive can best the trout
Not a woman of the cloth, or man, devout
But the kushtaka,
The kushtaka lives between the veil
Claws and teeth on slippery tales.

I've ploughed fields from merrie England,
Drifted across the stolen Cuyahoga,
Mined the Rocky Mountains for silver,
Flown o'er amber waves, West
To rest in the Chugach
Where a tired wish remains.

Somewhere my tether severed,
The anchor dragged,
The kite left my child-hand's grip and
Sailed away with the winds.

The stories say kushtakas skirt between realms,
Dancing on rickety porches for old ones who see beyond the veil,
And young ones keen for a telling tale.

Carousing between the croon of a loon and the moon,
Somewhere between spring water and salt
They drip through the fog,
Silhouettes dancing,
On bogwater mirror,
Swaying to the rhythms of those we loved
Who stepped off the path
Into the mist.

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Kushtakas foretell danger.
Yet they masquerade as family.
Join us in between, they whisper.

Perched upon the boardwalk
I sit with Raven and search the stars below
For that fish of legend
Yet only a reflection
Of the moon, I see
Dripping from wet whiskers
Suspended, in inkblot eyes

Deep as acorns descending
Like false flies from anguished anglers
Cast aside by the wise salmon of the well.

Lost just beneath the surface
In a place where the kushtakas dwell.



Land Otter by Rob Ammerman // Pencil Formline Illustration with Digital Color



Wild Bill by Susan Ogle // Oil & Acrylic Painting

The Weathers family and Wild Bill were dear friends.

They lived on neighboring lots at Hawkins Island, and shared nightly meals together.

The Weathers boys met Bill when they were two and three years old. He was a part of the family.

Laife had an assignment to do a biographical essay on an important person in 3rd or 4th grade.

He chose to write about Wild Bill. Here is that essay.

Wild Bill

By Laife Weathers

William H. Stafford, alias Wild Bill, was born in 1918, on February 1, in a little town called Cable, Wisconsin. He was one of ten kids. He went to school from first through fourth grade. His first job was at a logging camp. He did what was called a toteteam which he hauled food for the men and horses. He worked with logging for seven to eight years.

After logging he went into harvesting weat. There were no fancy tools back then they used horses. Bill worked with weat all through North Dakota and Montana.

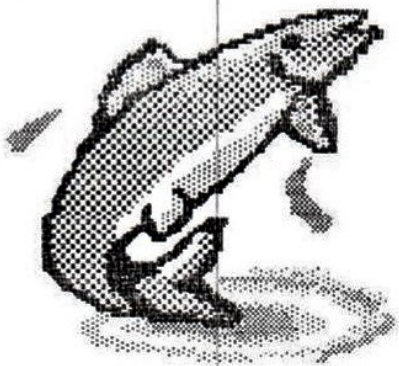
When he finished that he worked on odd jobs from the midwest to Idaho. In Idaho he saw a man who had hit a mother bear with a snowplow and Bill found the cubs. He stuck one in each pocket and went to the closest restaurant and the people were in line to take a picture of them. He made a cigar box bed for them. Bill stayed there for three weeks. When he left the restaurant he went to northern Arizona, and by that time the cubs were big enough to hurt someone, so Bill put them in zoo, then he left the country and it was like leaving the family. Bill went east of the Mississippi. Then he wondered around the eastern states

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as a hobo. During his travels he met John Dilenger who was a famous outlaw. After that he went to the westcoast: California, Origan, and Washington. In California he was a animal handler for the movies. He worked in THE WIZARD OF OZ. Then he worked in San Francicco. In 1940 he went to Alaska to work in a mine. When the mine was sold out from under Whitehorse he went to work on the Alcan highway in 1942 at Whitehorse. When they finished Bill got drunk and went to Juneau. He went to a real fancy hotel but didn't like it, so he checked in some where else. He unfortantly signed up for Adak. He went to Adak in 1944 and he went as a minor. He was hired by a company which workedfor the government. It was called West Construction. He worked in Adak for six months then he took a boat up the aleutian chain. It was a long hard trip. When they made it to Seward they took a train to Anchorage. Bill went to work at independent mine. Up in Wasilla in 1945. After that in a coal mine in Sutan. He a telagram from his sister that said she was coming, but he it back and packed and went to Bristol Bay in 1946. His was a fisherman and trapper until he moved to Valdez. In Valdez he did a little bit of every

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thing. He stayed in Valdez for about five years. Then came to Cordova and lived in Behimors old yellow house. Then he moved all over Hawkins Island in 1985. He was a fisherman and fished on the flats. When the earthquake happended Bill was standing on the beach in mud Bay. In 1973 Bill moved to the dump. He was hired by the city to make sure everything was in order but he also salvaged many things. He retired in 1980 and moved to Deep Bay on Hawkins Island. He lived on Trembllys Island for fifteen years then in 1987 he moved to a place mom and dad bought for him. Hes lived there ever since then and hes seventy three years old and it's 1990 now.



THE END

Wild Bill

Born: February 1st, 1918 [Cable, Wisconsin]

Died: August 30th, 1993 [Cordova, Alaska]



Garçon by Sergei Bogatchev // Acrylic Painting